

lightness of proportion" which is one characteristic of the Period, is likely to be so strongly marked as in buildings of later date and more advanced character; but that even these earlier buildings are devoid of such indications, is not correct: and to shut out the pointed arch, as one of the most influential and important of these features, because it is the earliest, is preposterous. It is my intention to enlarge upon this point hereafter: I will, therefore, for the present, content myself with again contrasting the opinions of "F. S. A." and "J. H. P." on the subject.

I take the passages from *THE BUILDER* of last week, and the "Companion to the Glossary."

MALMESBURY ABBEY CHURCH.

F. S. A.

J. H. P.

"Malmesbury Abbey does not show any lightness of proportion: the only mark of Transition is the pointed arch; and this alone is no mark at all: it is found in many buildings even of the eleventh century."—*The Builder*, vol. ix. p. 431.

"Mr. Britton is disposed to assign this building to the time of Henry I., but in the absence of any direct testimony, the pointed arches must be considered as conclusive against such a supposition. The pillars and arches are massive, but the character of the mouldings and ornaments is late Norman. Style, *Transilloy*."—*Companion to the Glossary*, p. 28.

That Simon, Earl of Southampton, built a church in that town, in imitation of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, before A.D. 1127, even if the documentary evidence, which "F. S. A." does not give, were unexceptionable, is no proof that the pointed arches in St. Sepulchre's, Northampton, are of that date; moreover, the corresponding arches in the church at Jerusalem, Earl Simon's "model," as "F. S. A." calls it, were not pointed, as he infers, but circular, and remain so to the present day.*

As regards Fountains Abbey Church, I find it called "Transition from Norman," by "J. H. P." in pl. 16 of the "Glossary," containing a fragment of the nave copied from a plate in the "Architectural Parallels;" and the other two buildings, Kirkstall and Buildwas, are decidedly more advanced than either Malmesbury or Fountains. I still require the answer of "F. S. A." in regard to the remaining nineteen examples.

"F. S. A." concludes his letter by stating that the question in dispute between himself and Mr. Sharpe is, "whether such buildings as Ilfey Church belong to the same style or period as Wells Cathedral and Ripon Minster or not." Now, this is not the question between us: "F. S. A." knows that it is not: he knows that we both agree in calling Ilfey Church *Norman*, and of a "style or period" distinct from that of the latter buildings: the real difference between us is, that whilst "F. S. A." asserts it to have been built "about 1160," and in the reign of Henry II., I, or rather "J. H. P." asserts it was built from ten to twenty years earlier, and in the reign of Stephen. It remains for "F. S. A." to repudiate the authority of "J. H. P." and to declare, which I hardly think he will, that it is not equal to his own.

To the compiler of the "Glossary" I will here venture to make a suggestion. Let him reconsider and re-arrange his book, and, as I have already done, let him take off the back, detach the plates, cut off the fictitious dates, and having re-assorted them under the heads of the Seven Periods, republish the work as a new edition. Much that is at present conflicting and confused in it will then disappear, and the whole arrangement become, what he half admits that it would appear to be, "easy," "obvious," "natural." That he will do this sooner or later, and that he will do it in the manner in which he has adopted the opinions and copied the designs of far abler men than myself, that is to say, without notice or acknowledgment, I have not the smallest doubt.

EDMUND SHARPE.

* *See* Willie's Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

MR. SHARPE has obviously this great advantage over any opponents. He has been for several years collecting examples to suit his theories, and ignoring all those that did not suit his purpose; and although the examples which tell the opposite way may be equally numerous, it would require as much time and labour to collect them, and no one is likely to be prepared off-hand to cite these instances. I never pledged myself to do any thing of the kind. I merely warned your readers against taking Mr. Sharpe's fanciful "Periods" for historical facts, as they would find themselves misled by them. Mr. Sharpe challenges my authority for the date of the Five Sinters at York. It is T. Stubbs, in his "Actus Pontificum Eboracensium," apud Twicken, decem scriptores est, 1727, where he says: "Hujus pater Johannes genere Romanus Eboracensis ecclesie thesaurarius et canonicus partem crucis ecclesie beati Petri Eboraci boralem, quae se extendit versus palatium archiepiscopi, et egregium campanile in medio crucis ejusdem ecclesie erectum sumptibus suis propriis construxit." This John le Romain, who was afterwards archbishop, and died in 1295, was treasurer under Archbishop Ludham from 1258 to 1264, according to Mr. Browne's history; and though the fact of his building this great work at his own expense may be doubtful, as Mr. Browne considers it, the date has not hitherto been considered doubtful. Stubbs is believed to have lived about a hundred years after the event which he records, and had access to documents not now in existence, or at least not known to be so.

Respecting Wymington, there is evidently a misprint of a 2 for a 3 in my first letter, which I had not observed until Mr. Sharpe pointed it out. I cited it as a well-known example of the use of curvilinear tracery after the date Mr. S. assigns to it, the date being ascertained by an inscription on the brass of the merchant who rebuilt it, and being twenty or thirty years after the end of Mr. Sharpe's "Period." I do not pretend to follow all Mr. Sharpe's fanciful vagaries, and find examples to contradict him in each instance. I consider the facts too notorious to render any such process necessary. I may, however, mention an instance of the use of lancet windows, considerably after Mr. Sharpe's "Period," which occurs to my memory. The ruins of Barnham Abbey, near Maidenhead, are still partly standing, and exhibit a series of lancet windows. This priory was founded by Richard, King of the Romans, in 1265, and the buildings must, therefore, be subsequent to that date. Respecting the transition from the Norman to the Early Gothic, the difference of opinion between Mr. Sharpe and myself evidently arises in this way: we differ as to what constitutes transition: he considers a building of heavy massive character, with plain Norman mouldings and details, as belonging to the same class or "Period" with Ripon Minster and the nave of Wells, merely because the arches are pointed, although every other feature is quite different. I consider this as a bad division in point of style, and not correct as a historical "period." Respecting the later divisions, if Mr. Sharpe had called them styles, or what they are more properly, subdivisions of styles, I should not have interfered; but when I saw his "Seven Periods" quoted in *THE BUILDER* as if they were historical, I thought it necessary to warn your readers that this is not the case. The exceptions are so numerous that no reliance can be placed upon this system as a guide to the age of a building: it is calculated rather to mislead than assist the student. The term Geometrical has been a term long in use for a particular kind of tracery, and as a subdivision of the Decorated style. Mr. Sharpe calls by the same name, and includes in his division, another class of tracery, which is always accompanied by mouldings and details of quite a different kind: his own example, Lichfield Cathedral, has the tooth-ornament, and other details of the Early English style: the Chapter-house at Salisbury is another example.

It can only lead to confusion to mix them up with such buildings as Exeter Cathedral,

Merton College Chapel, Oxford, &c. &c., in which all the details and mouldings are quite different, and evidently belonging to a late style, and not to the same "Period." The "Curvilinear Period" is equally ill defined: windows with tracery of geometrical patterns are continually recurring during this period. Elton, in Huntingdonshire, and Stoke Golding, in Leicestershire, occur to me as instances where these two forms of tracery are used in alternate windows of the same building. These are not rare exceptions, but common examples. The more the matter is investigated the more people will be satisfied that Mr. Sharpe's "Periods" are not real and natural divisions of our mediæval building, as a whole: they apply to windows only, and other parts do not agree with them. The names are calculated to mislead, and windows of this or that form do not indicate a particular date with sufficient accuracy to be taken as a guide.

As another instance of the vagueness of Mr. Sharpe's definition, and the fallacy of his division as a guide to the age of a building, I may mention the large round window in the north transept of Lincoln Cathedral. This agrees with every one of Mr. Sharpe's definitions of the "Geometrical Period," and therefore the student, relying on Mr. Sharpe's guidance, must consider it as built between 1245 and 1315;—the fact being, that it is part of the work of St. Hugh, who died in 1200, and is copied from a similar window at Blois, of which city the architect was a native, and therefore belongs to the very commencement of Mr. Sharpe's "Lancet Period," or about half a century before the time his system would assign to it.

F. S. A.

RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

WE have got an able condutor in our continued endeavours to promote the establishment and extension of cheap excursion and other fares for the million. Mr. Dickens, in his *Household Words*, agrees with us in thinking that the excursion system has by no means reached either its minimum of expense or its maximum of extension. He even goes beyond us in the conviction that the companies will raise their profits by lowering their fares. The wants of the great bulk of the people, as he very truly remarks, yet remain in fact unprovided for, "and this can only be accomplished by a further reduction in the present scale of transit. The progress of cheapness has by no means found its terminus. It has been prognosticated by those thoroughly acquainted with railways, and equally so with arithmetic, that a railway Rowland Hill will yet arise, and organise periodical trains to run similar distances as the mileage between London and Brighton (say, for simplicity, fifty miles), for the small sum of sixpence. If omnibuses at 'rattle over the stones' for two hours for sixpence each passenger, and after deducting the expense of coachman, condutor, horses, the wear and tear of the vehicle itself, still yield a good profit to the proprietor, a railway train occupying only the same time in the journey, stuffed full of sispenny passengers would yield a handsome profit. It must be remembered, too, that the omnibus pays a tax of three-halfpence a mile, while the Government has very properly remitted an impost on excursion trains." We are no indiscriminate advocate for cheapness in all things. The desperate competition of too many middlemen, all deriving their livelihoods out of goods which they merely hand over from producer to consumer, and that through a useless multiplicity of handings over, which, if engaged as manual operation in the production of valuables, would enrich this "country of shopkeepers" instead of impoverishing it in the support of a host of drones; the underselling system begotten by this savage competition for a share of the good things passing through their hands; the adulterations practised in this perpetual endeavour to undersell; the rabid desire of the consumers themselves to buy in the cheapest markets, and to share in delusive "sacrifices," where they are themselves the victims sacrificed on the altar of adulteration; all these causes combine to make the universal